

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 13

The IPA has been in existence for five years and has continually worked to achieve its mission. In 1998, many accomplishments were witnessed. Pending recommendations were adopted and implemented such as a new procedure for the forcible taking of blood, a written form for officer identification and the reduction of the time taken to complete investigations. The PSCU should be commended for eliminating the backlog of cases and creating a much more efficient process for the completion of complaints. In addition, a more open and accepting environment was created by the PSCU staff as was evidenced by their participation with the IPA in community outreach, and in providing opportunities to meet privately at the PSCU offices with individuals and community leaders. Another police department change that has positively impacted the citizen complaint process has

been the fact that the current Chief of Police is more personally involved with the complainants.

The Chief provides opportunities on a biweekly basis where residents can meet with him to discuss their concerns. This may be one reason why the total number of complaints decreased this year.

The IPA has also focused in providing services to the public beyond the confines of its office. Community presentations that were jointly conducted by the IPA and the PSCU reached hundreds of people. These presentations will continue in 1999 and will be expanded in order to provide alternative sites where the IPA can maintain direct contact with the local residents. In addition to making neighborhood presentations, the new focus will be to identify community centers in which community leaders can be trained to intake complaints and

then refer the complaints to either the PSCU or the IPA. This will promote two objectives. First, it will provide a means for ongoing communication and secondly, it will make it possible to reach those people that feel more comfortable filing a complaint in their neighborhood and with a person familiar to them. Yet another benefit of this outreach effort is that by identifying key people in the various communities, they will serve as a conduit to the IPA, thereby minimizing language and cultural barriers.

In a further effort to better serve the public, the IPA intends to organize and provide a forum where community leaders can provide the IPA feedback from their community and also take IPA information back to their respective neighborhoods and/or membership. The focus of this coalition will be to aid the IPA in identifying and addressing citizen

complaint issues of concern which are specific to each community (such as the Gay/Lesbian, African American, Latino, Vietnamese, etc.).

The IPA will continue to work on achieving its objectives and in furtherance of its mission. The IPA will report on its progress and challenges in the 1999 Year End Report.